Amendments to the Claims:

1-10. Cancelled.

11. (Currently amended) A pigment exhibiting a color-shifting effect comprising

a base material;

a first layer having a first optical thickness;

a second layer having a second optical thickness;

a third layer; and

optionally an outer protective layer,

wherein

said base material is a mica;

said first layer and said third layer each independently comprise a metal oxide having a high refractive index;

said second layer comprises a metal oxide having a low refractive index; ~~and~~

said base material is coated with (1) said first layer, (2) said second layer, (3) said third layer, and optionally (4) said outer protective layer, said first layer being in direct contact with said base material, said second layer being in direct contact with said first layer and said third layer, and said protective layer being in direct contact with said third layer;

said first optical thickness is greater than an optical thickness of silver-white interference color and smaller than an optical thickness of golden-yellow interference color; and

the pigment exhibits a color-shifting effect.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently amended) The pigment of claim 11, wherein ~~the thickness of said second layer~~ said second optical thickness is greater than ~~the~~ an optical thickness of a ~~the~~ 2nd-order interference color.

14. (Currently amended) The pigment of claim 11, wherein ~~the thickness of said second layer~~ said second optical thickness is ~~between the~~ greater than an optical thickness of a 2^{nd}-order green interference color and ~~the~~ smaller than an optical thickness of ~~the~~ a 4^{th}-order interference color.

15. (Previously presented) The pigment of claim 11, wherein said metal oxide having a low refractive index is SiO_2.

16. (Previously presented) The pigment of claim 11, wherein said metal oxide having a high refractive index is selected from TiO_2, SnO_2, Fe_2O_3, Fe_3O_4, CoO, Co_2O_3, ZrO_2, Cr_2O_3, and mixtures and derivatives thereof.

17. (Previously presented) The pigment of claim 11, wherein said outer protective layer is an organic or an inorganic ferrous pigment.

18. (Withdrawn – currently amended) A method of preparing a pigment exhibiting a color-shifting effect of claim 11, the method comprising the steps of

(i) heating mica powder suspension in water;

(ii) adjusting the pH value of the mixture to between 2 and 9 by adding a diluted aqueous hydrochloric acid solution or a diluted aqueous sodium hydroxide solution;

(iii) adding a first inorganic salt solution;

(iv) maintaining the pH value of the mixture constant by adding a diluted aqueous hydrochloric acid solution or a diluted aqueous sodium hydroxide solution;

(v) stirring the mixture at constant temperature;

(vi) adjusting the pH value of the mixture to between 6 and 14 by adding a diluted aqueous hydrochloric acid solution or a diluted aqueous sodium hydroxide solution;

(vii) adding a second inorganic salt solution;

(viii) maintaining the pH value of the mixture constant by adding a diluted aqueous hydrochloric acid solution or a diluted aqueous sodium hydroxide solution;

(ix) stirring the mixture at constant temperature;

(x) adjusting the pH value of the mixture to between 2 and 9 by adding a diluted aqueous hydrochloric acid solution or a diluted aqueous sodium hydroxide solution;

(xi) adding a first inorganic salt solution;

(xii) maintaining the pH value of the mixture constant by adding a diluted aqueous hydrochloric acid solution or a diluted aqueous sodium hydroxide solution; and

(xiii) stirring the mixture at constant temperature.

19. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18, wherein said first inorganic salt solution comprises one or more compounds selected from the group consisting of $TiCl_4$, $TiOCl_2$, $SnCl_4$, $SnCl_2$, $FeCl_3$, $FeCl_2$, $CoCl_2$, $ZrOCl_2$ and $CrCl_3$.

20. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18, wherein said second inorganic salt solution comprises sodium silicate.

21. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18, wherein in step (i) the temperature is maintained at 60-90°C.

22. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18, wherein in steps (v), (ix), and (xiii) the mixture is stirred at constant temperature for a period of about 30 minutes.

23. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18 comprising further as step (xiv) flittering of the pigment, washing it, drying it, and optionally calcining it.

24. (New) A pigment exhibiting a color-shifting effect comprising

a base material;

a first layer having a first optical thickness that is well-defined;

a second layer having a second optical thickness that is well-defined;

a third layer; and

optionally an outer protective layer,

wherein

said base material is a mica;

said first layer and said third layer each independently comprise a metal oxide having a high refractive index;

said second layer comprises a metal oxide having a low refractive index;

said base material is coated with (1) said first layer, (2) said second layer, (3) said third layer, and optionally (4) said outer protective layer, said first layer being in direct contact with said base material, said second layer being in direct contact with said first layer and said third layer, and said protective layer being in direct contact with said third layer;

said first optical thickness is greater than an optical thickness of silver-white interference color and smaller than an optical thickness of golden-yellow interference color;

said second optical thickness is greater than an optical thickness of a second order interference color; and

the pigment exhibits a color-shifting effect.

25. (Previously presented) The pigment of claim 24, wherein said metal oxide having a low refractive index is SiO_2.

26. (Previously presented) The pigment of claim 24, wherein said metal oxide having a high refractive index is selected from TiO_2, SnO_2, Fe_2O_3, Fe_3O_4, CoO, Co_2O_3, ZrO_2, Cr_2O_3, and mixtures and derivatives thereof.

27. (Previously presented) The pigment of claim 24, wherein said outer protective layer is an organic or an inorganic ferrous pigment.

28. (New) A pigment exhibiting a color-shifting effect comprising

a base material;

a first layer having a first optical thickness that is well-defined;

a second layer having a second optical thickness that is well-defined;

a third layer; and

optionally an outer protective layer,

wherein

said base material is a mica;

said first layer and said third layer each independently comprise a metal oxide having a high refractive index;

said second layer comprises a metal oxide having a low refractive index;

said base material is coated with (1) said first layer, (2) said second layer, (3) said third layer, and optionally (4) said outer protective layer, said first layer being in direct contact with said base material, said second layer being in direct contact with said first layer and said third layer, and said protective layer being in direct contact with said third layer;

said first optical thickness is greater than an optical thickness of silver-white interference color and smaller than an optical thickness of golden-yellow interference color;

said second optical thickness is greater than an optical thickness of a second order green interference color and smaller than an optical thickness of a fourth order interference color; and

the pigment exhibits a color-shifting effect.

29. (Previously presented) The pigment of claim 28, wherein said metal oxide having a low refractive index is SiO_2.

30. (Previously presented) The pigment of claim 28, wherein said metal oxide having a high refractive index is selected from TiO_2, SnO_2, Fe_2O_3, Fe_3O_4, CoO, Co_2O_3, ZrO_2, Cr_2O_3, and mixtures and derivatives thereof.

31. (Previously presented) The pigment of claim 28, wherein said outer protective layer is an organic or an inorganic ferrous pigment.